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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



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## A Prophet Sent from God?

### Examining the Life and Claims of William M. Branham

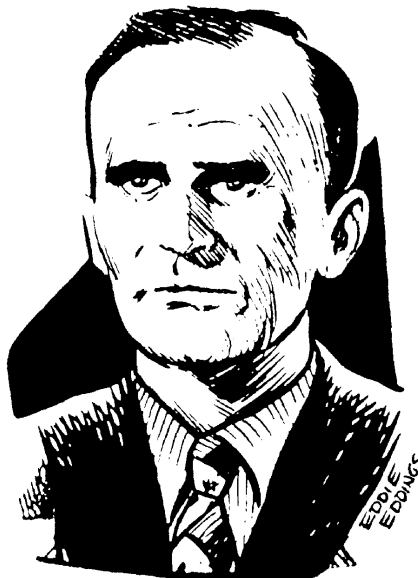
by Stephen F. Cannon

At PFO we get many requests for information on different religious groups and personalities. One request that arises periodically is for information on William M. Branham.

Even though Branham died in an automobile accident in 1965, there are still small groups of his followers around the country that propagate his teachings, and occasionally his name will be spoken with awe by Christians in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. Usually these will recount Branham's miraculous ability to heal the sick and obtain special words of knowledge from the Lord. Very few of these, however, seem to know much about his background, claims or teachings.

#### Early Life

Born to Charles and Ella Branham in April 1906, as the first of nine children, William's early life was said to have been marked by many supernatural signs and angelic visitations: a visible light or halo over his crib at birth (**Footprints on the Sands of Time**, William Marrion Branham, Spoken Word Publications, Jeffersonville, Ind., 1975, pp. 2,21,93); an angelic voice at seven years of age cautioning him to 'never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way, for I have a work for you to do when you get



older" (**William Branham: A Man Sent from God**, Gordon Lindsey, William Branham Publisher, Jeffersonville, Ind., 1950, pg. 30); and shortly thereafter a vision wherein he foresaw a bridge built over the Ohio River where 16 men would be killed in a construction accident. (**William Branham: A Prophet Visits South Africa**, Julius Stadskev, Julius Stadskev Publisher, Minneapolis, Minn., 1952, pp. 3-4)

Branham was raised in abject poverty in rural Indiana. Even though he many times heard the mysterious voice of the angel, Branham's upbringing was not religious. He did, however, manage to follow the angel's advice from his "first visitation" and never did smoke nor drink. This led the young Branham to always feel different from the people around him.

"There was always that peculiar feeling, like someone standing near me, trying to say something to me, and especially when I was alone. No one seemed to understand me at all. The boys I associated with would have nothing to do with me, because I wouldn't drink or smoke, and all the girls went to dances of which I wouldn't partake either, so it seemed that all through my life I was just a black sheep knowing no one who understood me and not even understanding myself." (**A Man Sent From God**, pg. 31)

When he was about 20 years old, Branham was overcome by toxic gas while working for the Public Service Company of Indiana. He was hospitalized. Upon hearing that he needed surgery, Branham feared he might die and realized that he was not ready to meet God.

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# EDITORIALS

## FRANK BUCHMAN? REPOPULARIZING OLD ERRORS

An advertisement in the June 1988 Bookstore Journal that promotes a new biography of Frank Buchman reminds us that cult leaders may go away, but their ideas usually reappear.

On *The Tail Of A Comet, The Life of Frank Buchman, a Small Town American Who Awakened the Conscience of the World*, recounts the life of Buchman, founder of the "Moral Rearmament" or "Oxford Group" movement. The advertisement quotes Paul Tournier, who exults, "I owe him everything, all the spiritual adventure that has been my life." Malcolm Muggeridge endorses the book and Donald Bloesch likens Buchman to a modern-day Francis of Assisi. The ad also claims that Buchman influenced Ami Carmichael and Eric Liddel, the Olympic gold medalist who was portrayed in the film *Chariots of Fire*.

Like comets, which appear in the sky and shine brightly awhile, then disappear, then reappear years later, Buchman's teachings could be due for a return to prominence.

Buchman (1878-1961) is said to have influenced Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi and U.S. President Harry Truman. It also is claimed that Buchman had much influence over students at Penn State, Oxford, and Princeton universities.

However, it is a fact that C.M. Chavasse, master of St. Peters Hall, Oxford, and President John Grier Hibben of Princeton denounced Buchman and his teachings. (*Heresies Exposed*, William Irvine, Loizeaux, pp. 45, 50). Hibben banned Buchman from the Princeton campus.

There are three major aspects of Buchman's teaching that Christians must challenge in light of what the Bible says.

The first is Buchman's lack of concern for sound doctrine. Acts 2:42 states that the early church "continued in the Apostles' doctrine." Doctrine was crucial to those early Christians and should be to us. Moral Rearmament had distinctives but little doctrine. It had certain practices but little or no biblical exegesis. Buchman talked of "soul surgery," but not about spiritual regeneration.

He stressed morality and virtue but not much Bible content. His morality was not strictly biblical morality or morality that flows from spiritual regeneration. Buchman's life change consisted of self effort and not the "fruit of the spirit." Paul urged Timothy to "give attendance to doctrine" in 1 Timothy 4:13. He also stressed doctrine in 1 Timothy 1:3, 9-10; 4:6, 13, 16; and 6:1-3.

Christians also must challenge Buchman's system of attaining divine guidance. Buchman taught that each morning one must put one's mind in neutral and get direct revelation from God. He taught that people could hear God by doing this and that they should keep a written record of the revelations. This form of personal revelation leads to disregard for the Bible, which is God's revealed word, and what it teaches. As

an example, Buchman's own "God guidance" always led him to seek out the company of the rich and famous, not the poor and needy.

True biblical guidance consists of involvement with the Word of God, praise, prayer and confession, all of which involve mental effort. We are to look to God's word for wisdom and direction. Relaxed minds can be a playground for Satan and passive minds open to impulsive thoughts open the believer up to the influence of the flesh. Writing down cryptic thoughts that pop into the mind cannot be construed as biblical guidance. Many a person's first thought in the morning is of food. That's hardly inspired.

Thirdly, Buchman taught an inadequate view of man's sin and God's provision for it. Buchman stressed confessing one's sins in group meetings. Emphasis was on personal reformation. The insistence on sharing, surrender, changing and guidance sounded good but these were not defined in a scriptural way. Confessing sin directly to God is one thing but dwelling on the details of sins with other people is another. Restitution and public reconciliation, when needed, are commendable. However, Buchman's practice sounds more like group therapy than biblical practice. J.K. Van Baalen says, "Buchmanism offers psychology or psychiatry, not salvation." (J.K. Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, Wm. Eerdmans, pg. 237) Moral improvement and even better relationships are good but they do not necessarily result from spiritual renewal.

Buchman may have been a precursor of the modern health-and-wealth preachers. He excused the luxury he lived in by asking, "Isn't God a millionaire?" (*Time Magazine*, Aug. 18, 1961, pg. 59) Man's sins and God's provision are the heart of the Gospel. Bootstrap religions with prosperous outcomers are a counterfeit.

Jude's epistle said that some false teachers are like "wandering stars." Comets — "wandering stars" — come and go, but the Word of God endures forever.

—GRF

**Author's note:** For a firsthand account of the rise and fall of the Moral Rearmament Movement, read *They Have Found a Faith*, by Marcus Bach, Bobbs Merrill Co., pp. 123-161.



## THE ROOTS AND FRUITS OF "DELIVERANCE"

R.C. Sproul, in his 1988 publication, *Pleasing God*, addresses the current renewal of interest in devils in both the secular and Christian communities. His comments to the Christian body deserve our attention:

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# NEWS UPDATE

## CARTHAGE JAIL SITE RENOVATION PLANNED

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced in June that it is planning a \$750,000 development for its Carthage, Ill., historical site. The Old Carthage Jail is where LDS founder Joseph Smith Jr. and his brother Hyrum were killed in 1844.

The LDS church acquired the building during the 1930s and subsequently added a formal visitors center in 1963. The current renovation will include an enlarged parking lot, a new wing on the visitors center, statues of the Smith brothers and several other monuments.

The Mormon publication, **Church News**, for the week ending June 11, 1988, stated that the LDS church plans are being warmly received by communities in the area. Mayors from several surrounding cities were present during the formal announcement.

Edwin Q. Cannon, director of the (Mormon) Nauvoo Visitors Center, told the Peoria (Ill.) **Journal Star** that the Old Carthage Jail "holds the same significance to his (Joseph Smith Jr.) 6.5 million followers as Calvary holds for Christians all over the world."

—MKG



## INN ACCUSED OF BIAS AGAINST MORMONS

The U.S. Justice Department has filed a civil lawsuit alleging that a Christian-owned motel in Altavista, Va., discriminates against Mormons by denying them lodging.

But the president and director of The Masters Inn says that the motel is a Christian retreat center where people of any faith can attend retreats. Some Mormons were denied the opportunity to hold their own services last spring because their religious beliefs are at odds with those of the Southern Baptists who run the inn, Larry Ferguson said.

"To open our doors to cults would mean that we'd have to propagate beliefs that are against our Gospel," Ferguson said. "Their beliefs are anti-Christ. If we were forced to open our doors to the Mormons, we'd have to open them to the Church of Satan."

"They can come into the programs we conduct. Anyone can. We do not allow groups that are the antithesis of Christ to come in here and teach anti-Christ doctrines."

However, the Justice Department suit alleges: "The defendant (Masters Inn) follows a pattern and practice of denying to persons on the basis of their religion, including persons who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the use and enjoyment of facilities and services of The Masters Inn on the same basis as such facilities are provided to other members of the general public."

The suit, filed in Lynchburg, said the discrimination will continue without a court order stopping it.

A federal official familiar with the case said that if a court order is issued and The Masters Inn refused to follow it, the ministry could be held in contempt and fined.

—KAM



## MORE TROUBLES FOR UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH

A Feb. 24 indictment has been handed down by an Orlando, Fla., federal grand jury charging David Hurley of Greenville, S.C.; William Wakeman Jr. of Marietta, Ga.; and Scott Slaybeck Jr. of Altamonte Springs, Fla., with promoting income-tax evasion through the mail-order Universal Life Church. The court trial was to begin Aug. 22.

The indictment said the three sold Universal Life Church memberships, advising members to exempt up to half their adjusted gross income as charitable deductions through the establishment of their own church. Hurley is also accused of urging members to deduct travel expenses incurred visiting family by claiming the trip to be "religious pilgrimages."

The Universal Life Church was founded in 1962 by Kirby Hensley. It was granted tax-exempt status in 1973, but this status was revoked by the Internal Revenue Service in 1984, which charged that church earnings benefited the family of the founder. The church, which is based in Modesto, Calif., has no doctrinal statement and claimed some 13 million members in 1984.

—MKG



## PROMOTING THE NEW AGE

A Denver-based company, New Age America, has begun production of what it calls the "ultimate expo" of New Age products marketing.

The company claims to be "currently producing the first 'video expo' ever produced for national television." The company also asserts that the video expo will reach more than 15 million American homes and 34.5 million viewers.

A September broadcast of the expo was scheduled on the TEMPO Cable Television Network. In addition to the cable broadcasts, distribution of VHS home videocassettes of the expo to "every video tape outlet in the U.S." is planned. Future goals include the creation of a full-time New Age cable network.

The expo will feature seminars with "top-name guest speakers" and exhibitors of New Age products and services. The exhibitors included promoters of channeling, crystals, astrology, metaphysics, and holistic health and well-being.

—MKG



# AN OPEN LETTER...

## To You Who Are Disillusioned with The Way Ministry

by John P. Juedes

You feel hurt, sad, confused, betrayed, ripped off. You once believed The Way Ministry had integrity, was God's ministry and was led by the Man of God. It feels overwhelming to have something that once was your whole life suddenly ripped from you. Sadly, the events of the last two years have even driven some believers to mental institutions and suicide. This need not happen to you, though. There is life outside The Way International.

Many people who have become disillusioned with The Way Ministry find themselves going through stages. Most feel the need to hear the exposés against the trustees, then experience a period of emotional turmoil as the full implications of the facts hit them. Then there is a time of new discovery of what the Bible says, independent of what The Way says about the Bible. This is accompanied by a reconstruction of spiritual life and fellowship.

### Answers, Please!

You have had hundreds of questions come up in your mind. There are answers.

First, there is no real doubt that most Way trustees, both past and present, have approved and practiced ungodly actions and beliefs. Top former ministry leaders such as John and Pat Lynn, Sue Pierce, Ralph Dubofsky and others have documented that most trustees have approved and practiced adultery and in the process have hurt hundreds of women. Lynn, Steve Sann and others have revealed the authoritarianism of the trustees, their resistance to correction and misuse of finances.

It is also clear that Dr. Wierwille himself both practiced all these as well as

taught and defended them to others. There is also overwhelming evidence that he plagiarized scores of pages of material from J.E. Stiles, E.W. Bullinger, E.W. Kenyon and others over a 35-year period. He lied about the origin of the writings by placing his own name on the material and not crediting his sources.

### What Does The Word Say About Such Men?

Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers ... nor the covetous ... shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Outside (the city are) ... everyone who loves and practices lying. (Revelation 22:15) (They are) ... ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness ... (Jude 4)

This is a hard teaching for you who knew Dr. Wierwille as Father, friend and teacher, but for this reason it is all the more important to take to heart.

What about everything you have been taught over the years? Is it all true? All false? It is good to question even the embedded teachings, such as believing, abundant sharing, four crucified, one God, three days and three nights, and the rest. But you should not throw out everything just because Doctor taught it any more than you should accept everything he taught.

Ralph Dubofsky offered a good caution at the May 1988 American Fellowship Services meeting. He recognized the tendency to latch on to all E.W. Bullinger wrote just because most of what Doctor has taught you over the years has been Bullinger's work (though Doctor seldom gave him credit). So you need to resurrect critical thinking based on The Word.

Some are hesitant to re-evaluate belief in the Trinity, mostly because of the stereotype The Way has promoted. In a nutshell, belief in the Trinity amounts to understanding that the Bible teaches four things: 1) there is one God; 2) the Father is God and is separate from the Son and the Holy Spirit; 3) Jesus Christ is God and is separate from the Father and the Holy Spirit; 4) the Holy Spirit is God and is separate from the Father and Son. You already believe two of these things and the Bible has a lot to say about the other two as well.

There are answers. There is life outside The Way International.

### Get It Off Your Chest!

When you see many of the answers, you will probably feel an emotional upheaval. You first may try to deny that Dr. Wierwille did anything wrong, or try to rationalize how he could have done these things without guilt (for instance, "Yes, Doctor plagiarized a lot, but it was OK because..."). When this passes, find someone who will listen as you vent your hurt and anger for being deceived by leaders you trusted. This will get you much farther than retreating into drugs, alcohol, or some other escape. You will probably not want anything to do with any Christian organization, fearing you will be betrayed again. You will probably often feel lonely, even with other people around.

God can heal these hurts, though, for Jesus Christ said:

"The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release for the

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# Dungeons and Dragons

## What's So Bad About It?

by Tim Tryon

Since its debut in 1974, the game Dungeons and Dragons has been the target of criticism and praise. Promoters of the game claim it can enhance a person's creativity. Critics point to its suspected occultic influences and emphasis on violence.

Although the publicity D&D receives has been declining from a peak in the early 1980s, the problems that the game poses are just as real today. Most Christians are still uninformed about D&D and the effects it can have on those who play it.

In researching this article, it became apparent that all some Christians knew about D&D and other fantasy role-playing games was that their pastors condemned the games as witchcraft or occultism. While this may have kept them from experimenting with D&D, it did little to build understanding of those who do play it and why they shouldn't.

According to D&D's primary inventor, E. Gary Gygax, there are about 3.5 million fantasy role-playing game enthusiasts in North America alone. (**Role-Playing Mastery**, Gary Gygax, Perigee Books, New York, 1987, pg. 12) Because the game is so popular, it is likely that every Christian in America knows someone who plays D&D or another, similar game. Therefore, it is important that Christians understand the game, its players and why the game might be dangerous.

Fantasy role-playing games are adventures into a world that exists in the mind of the player. This world is defined by the rules of the game and by the referee, called a Dungeon Master in D&D. The first and probably most important step in these games is the creation of the "character" that each player assumes. This character receives a randomly determined set of attributes. During the course of the game, the player tries to respond to each situation that arises as he imagines he would if he actually were a character with the attributes his character has been assigned.

The referee determines what situations the characters will encounter. Prior to the

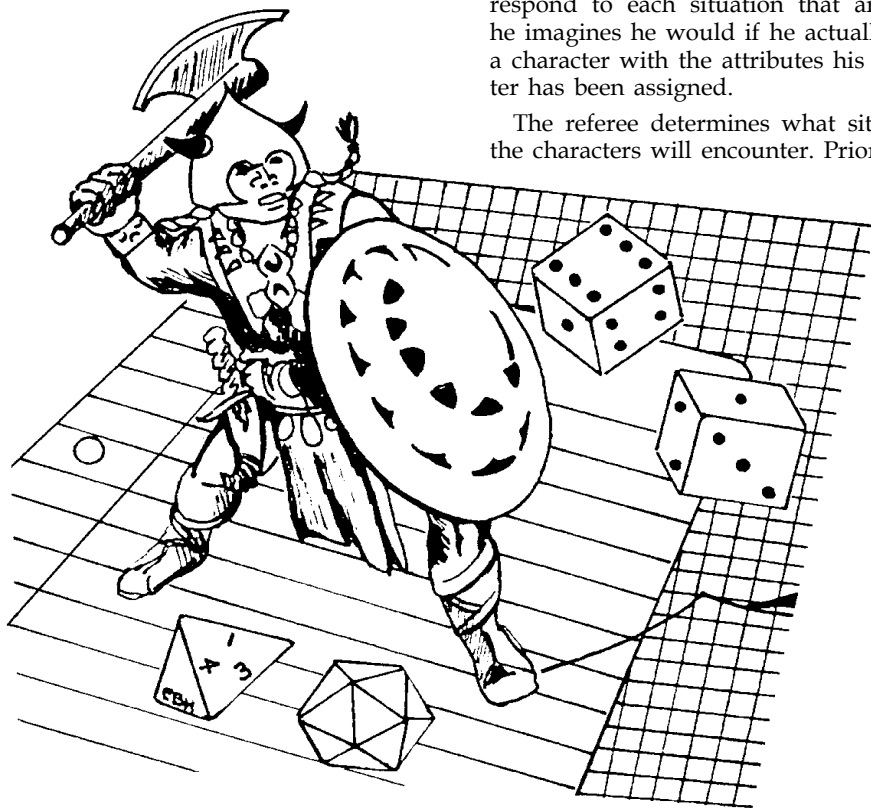
game, he has planned the basic adventure that will be played by the characters. He creates the world in which the characters will exist. He uses the rules of the game as a framework into which he adds details from his own imagination.

But it is in the mind of the individual player that this world must take shape if the game is to be enjoyed to its fullest. Gygax calls this imaginary world the "spirit" of the game:

"The spirit of an RPG pervades all the statistics, mechanics, and descriptions that make up the actual rules; it is everywhere and nowhere in particular at the same time. A game master or player who simply absorbs all the rules and uses them to play out a game adventure may be able to achieve expertise in the play of the game, but in the final analysis, he is doing no more than going through the motions — unless he also perceives, understands, and appreciates the spirit that underlies all those rules." (**Role-Playing Mastery**, pg. 26)

It is fairly obvious that this spirit is the world view designed into the game by its creator. Most non-role-playing games are limited by the specific topic of the game. This is not true with the role-playing games. "Because the game seeks to reflect actual life, the campaign world has a scope equal to that of the universe, that is, most probably infinite." (**Role Playing Mastery**, pg. 45) Role-playing games are fundamentally different from other games in that they must include a modified world view. Especially in the case of fantasy-based RPGs, this world view must differ substantially from the views which most of humanity considers to be reality. Many researchers have come to the conclusion that the world view presented by these games is similar, if not identical, to the world view held by proponents of the occult. Gary North has done a great deal of research on the occult from a Christian perspective and his opinion of D&D is not reassuring:

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## Dungeons and Dragons

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"Without any doubt in my own mind, after years of study of the history of occultism, after having researched a book on the topic, after having consulted with scholars in the field of historical research, I can say with confidence: These games are the most effective, most magnificently packaged, most profitably marketed, most thoroughly researched introduction to the occult in man's recorded history." (Bob Maddux, **Fantasy Explosion**, Ventura, Calif., Regal Books, 1986, pp. 52-53. Quoting from "Games of Horror," **Remnant Review**, 5 Dec. 1980, pg. 8)

It is this "occult connection" that is most often attacked within Christian circles. And while there is validity to this criticism, it can be carried to unrealistic extremes. For example, in 1981 a controversy was sparked by a radio evangelist's claim that D&D is a demonic religion "exactly like witchcraft." (Ronald B. Taylor, "Fight Over Game: Play or Worship of Devil?" **Los Angeles Times**, 24 June 1981, sect. 1, pg. 3) On the other extreme, there are those that say there is no connection between D&D and the occult. A standard defense of the game by its supporters is, "It's only a game — only make-believe." Elliot Miller gives an example of the effect "a mere game" can have when it deals with the occult:

"When I was of high-school age I was extremely skeptical about anything reputedly supernatural. I recall engaging in a mock seance with a group of friends. Our lightheartedness was turned to fear when suddenly the 'medium,' my best friend, began to convulse. His eyes rolled back in his head and a strange voice emerged from his throat. For the following two years this young Jew was tormented by spirits. Withdrawing from all social contracts, he haunted graveyards until he was delivered through the power of Jesus Christ." (Elliot Miller, "Dungeons & Dragons," **Forward**, vol. 4, no. 2, pg. 10)

This should not be taken to mean that everyone who plays D&D will become involved with demonic or occultic forces. This writer's eight years of involvement with D&D produced no observation of obviously supernatural activity. However, Miller's experience should highlight the fact that there is a danger of an occultic encounter even if the participants have no intention of having one.

Christians are not the only ones criticizing D&D. Two of the most vocal groups to oppose the game are the group "Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons (BADD) and the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV). Both organizations have emphasized the changes in behavior of people who have played the game. They cite 29 instances of murder and suicide, between 1979 and 1985, which they claim are directly related to D&D. ("Critics Link Fantasy Game to 29 Deaths," **Christianity Today**, May 17, 1985, pg. 64) In January 1985, Dr. Thomas Radecki, chairman of NCTV and University of Illinois Medical School psychiatrist, stated, "There is no doubt in my mind that the game Dungeons & Dragons is causing many young men to kill themselves and others." (Beth Austin, United Press International, New York, Jan. 18, 1985)

Dieter Sturm, spokesman for TSR Inc., D&D's manufacturer, argues that D&D puts the player into the role of the good guy:

"In the Dungeons & Dragons game, what we're talking about is good vs. evil. Evil is never portrayed in an attractive light. All of the Dungeons & Dragons products focus on the struggle of good vs. the forces of evil, casting the protagonist as the agent of right." (Austin, UPI)

Compare this with two statements by Gary Huckabay, a young D&D player whom **Life Magazine** called the "creme de la creme" of Dungeon Masters:

"It's fun to put half-orc babies in a catapult and fire them at a wall. They splat very nicely. I also enjoy cutting off their eyelashes, mopping their faces with a mace and melting them with green slime.

...If I don't like a law, I break it. If I don't like a player, I kill him. Evil characters have so much more freedom, don't you think?" (Anne Fadiman, "Portrait: Gary Huckabay — A Teenage Master of Wizardry and Enchantment," **Life Magazine**, March 1982, pp. 17, 22)

Many D&D players feel the same way. While the rule books don't come out and say that evil characters tend to be more successful, it becomes obvious to most players after a few sessions of play. The rules allow characters who have been chosen to be "chaotic-evil," a term used to describe a certain set of moral attributes, to act with much more freedom than their opposite numbers, who are classified as "lawful-good." The former is free to act in his own best interest in every situation, while the latter always

must place his own interests below those of the group and occasionally of the characters he encounters.

One common defense of D&D's violent influence is that D&D is no more likely to affect behavior than any other form of entertainment. John Eric Holmes, a veteran D&D player and neurologist at the Los Angeles County Hospital, used this line of reasoning in his article, "Confessions of a Dungeon Master":

"The level of violence in this make-believe world runs high. There is hardly a game in which the players do not indulge in murder, arson, torture, rape, or highway robbery...

I don't think this imaginary violence is any more likely to warp the minds of the participants than is the endless stream of violence in TV, movies, or literature." (John Eric Holmes, "Confessions of a Dungeon Master," **Psychology Today**, November 1980, pg. 88)

Yet in the very same article he says, "This 'alternate universe' feel to the world of Dungeons and Dragons is produced by its social reality. It is a shared fantasy, not a solitary one." (Holmes, pg. 93) D&D inventor Gygax says:

"Better still, the adventure is shared, and actively so. You are not engaging in parallel entertainment such as watching a film with friends. You are not alone reading a book or contesting against a computer program. A role-playing game is a group-interactive activity — and a ticket to worlds of adventure for you and your friends." (**Role Playing Mastery**, pg. 13)

It is interesting that advocates of D&D happily class it with other forms of entertainment when arguing against D&D's potential dangers, but quickly point to its differences when they want to convince someone of its entertainment value. In an interview on the CBS TV news program **60 Minutes**, Gygax claimed that "D&D is no more harmful than Monopoly." The founder of B.A.D.D., Pat Pulling, whose son committed suicide shortly after his character was cursed in a D&D session, replied to this by pointing out the differences between the ways the two games are played and by connecting role-playing games with the role-playing used by psychologists for behavior modification.

William Dear, the private investigator who led the search for Michigan State University student and D&D enthusiast James Dallas Egbert, reports the response of one of his investigators after spending three days at a D&D convention:

“What made an impression on me, (said the investigator), was the emotional and psychological involvement of the players. It was intense. I’ve seen Monopoly players who really get involved, but it’s nothing compared to this game. Dungeons & Dragons players are absorbed by the character they’ve assumed. They give up their own personalities. Standing there watching a player, you can almost feel the concentration. I could see changes in some people’s physical appearances...

...But let me give you an example of the concentration. One fellow seemed trapped in a dungeon at a dead end, with monsters coming up from behind to block any retreat and only a trap door available for possible escape. The player decided that his best chance was fighting the minutes. Each time the character got hurt by the monsters, I swear this guy felt the pain. He winced. His face contorted in agony. Once he even let out a scream. I could see the determination in his eyes as he struggled to save himself. I’ve seen some fairly perilous real-life situations... but none of these people involved was any more caught up in the drama than this fellow was. When he finally won his battle, that guy was totally exhausted. He hadn’t left his chair, but I’m telling you he might just as well have gone 15 rounds with Larry Holmes.” (William Dear, **The Dungeon Master: The Disappearance of James Dallas Egbert**, Boston, Mass., Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984, pg. 141)

My own experience with D&D taught me that there is a third and more insidi-

ous problem with the game: the time involvement. I began playing in 1975 during my last year and a half of high school. I had been playing war games for several years and had recently joined a local war-gamers club. Through the club I was introduced to D&D and it didn’t take me long to get hooked. I began spending all my weekends at the local game store playing D&D. My evenings were filled with thoughts of what I would achieve on Saturday and Sunday. This continued through my one year at the local junior college and probably contributed to my relatively low grades there. I decided to give up on college for the time being and joined the Navy.

Boot camp gave me a cold-turkey withdrawal from D&D for nine weeks, but as soon as I left camp for training as an electrician’s mate, I started looking for other D&D players. It didn’t take long to find some and get right back into the old habits. The Navy, however, had some advantages over college in the area of enforcing good study habits – or at least lengthy study habits – so I developed a more reasonable level of time involvement in the game. Throughout the remaining 5-1/2 years of enlistment I played D&D when time and availability of other players allowed. I know now that my spiritual life was the first thing to go when I needed time for D&D; I skipped church and gave up my time in the Scriptures and in prayer, all in the search for more time to spend with D&D.

Time is a valuable commodity in our society. Most of us feel we have less time than we need just to keep up with the necessities of life. We often use lack of time as an excuse for not doing things we feel we should do. Yet D&D is a

pastime with an insatiable appetite for time. Stanley Dokupil writes: “D&D, it is argued, stimulates creativity. To date, however, little evidence exists that D&D players are being creatively stimulated to do anything other than to continue playing D&D.” (Stanley Dokupil, **Dungeons And Dragons: Fantasy Role Playing and the Occult**, Spiritual Counterfeits Project, Berkeley, Calif., 1982, pg. 2) Even those who defend it realize that D&D requires major time commitment. Ian Livingstone, editor of **White Dwarf**, a magazine dedicated to role-playing games, gives this warning to prospective players:

“But be warned, these games are addictive, and are the most serious alternatives yet to reality ... gaming sessions are often quite long. Whole weekend sessions have been known when the players only stop to eat and sleep. (Ian Livingstone, **Dicing With Dragons: An Introduction to Role-Playing Games**, New York, N.Y., Signet Books, 1982, pp. 5, 17-18)

D&D is a potentially dangerous game. Its occult tendencies alone should warn Christians away. And although the dangers of role-playing are still being argued, we need to be cautious of what we voluntarily put into our minds. But the real danger of D&D lies in that which appears to be far less important – time. Ephesians 5:15-16 tells us to walk wisely making the most of our time. Colossians 3:2 tells us to set our minds on the things above, not on things of this world. But when we allow a mere game to supplant God in the center of our attention, we have become obsessed with that which is not profitable. As Christians we are called to make Christ our only obsession. ✨

## Open Letter

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prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor ... to comfort all who mourn, and provide ... the oil of gladness instead of a spirit of despair.” (Isaiah 61:1-3; see Luke 4:16-19)

Get it off your chest. Pray alone and with others for freedom, comfort, gladness and praise. There is abundant life outside The Way International.

### Read The Word!

The Bible is an exciting book. Many people have been thrilled to read the

Bible again ... by itself, without checking the commentary found in publications by The Way International.

Pick up an accurate, easy-reading translation such as the New International Version. You will be delighted to read the Word again without the cloudiness of the King James wording and the notes, deletions and additions the Teacher had you scratch in its columns. Do your best to read the Word without “Way brain.” You will meet Jesus Christ anew.

Read the Word. Work it for yourself without the coloring Doctor added. There is more than abundant life outside The Way Ministry.

## Where Do I Go From Here?

As you see the facts about the true nature of the leadership of The Way, vent your emotions and read the Word, you will constantly ask yourself:

“Where do I go from here?”

“I want to do God’s will, but I don’t know where or how.”

“I feel relieved to leave The Way International behind, but where do I go now?”

Some people have retreated into whatever religion or lifestyle they had before taking **Power For Abundant Living**. Others are producing near-clones of The  
(continued on next page)

## Open Letter

(continued from previous page)

Way Ministry that seem like a sequel to a "B" movie. Two attempts are Pacific West Fellowship (Steve Sann) and American Fellowship Services (John Lynn). Of course, they claim they will not be like The Way or national churches. But they do intend to publish books, periodicals and articles, provide a network of fellowships and traveling teachers and be ecumenical and educational. AFS assures us it will be different from The Way -- it will produce "Christian study," not "biblical research," such as John Lynn's 12-session class "Keys to Victorious Living." Does that sound a lot different to you? (Stay tuned, we may yet see the organizations appoint trustees, ordain clergy, open a leadership training program, etc.)

Is there an option to buying a ticket to a Way sequel? Actually, Christians are not only those people who took the class and wear green name tags. There is a large and sincere Christian world out there where believers do believe that the

Word of God is the will of God and do accurate biblical research based on study of a wide range of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts. Perhaps you are one of the many who bought the class while still in (or near) your teen-age years and mistook your little corner of the religious world for the whole Christian Church on Earth and accepted the Teacher's condemnations of the rest of it as a bunch of Maggie Muggins. True, there are some who doubt or wrongly divide the Word of truth, but many more who rightly divide and believe it.

The great diversity of Christ's Church does not mean it is divided. Christian movements and organizations supplement each other by serving different types of people with different needs and in varying areas. Christian leaders were wise enough a decade ago to criticize aspects of The Way Ministry that ex-Way leaders are criticizing now.

Only the Adversary wants you separated from the fellowship and teaching of the Church at large. Jesus Christ is head of His worldwide Body -- the

longer you remain amputated, the longer you hinder your own healing and growth. Pray, and actively look for and fellowship with Christians who believe that the Word of God is the will of God. You may want to begin with a home group rather than a large church service. As you do, your distrust of organizations will decrease, your growth will increase, and you will be preserving the unity of the Spirit. (Ephesians 4:1-17)

Discover the fellowship, teaching and unity you desire. There is more than abundant life outside The Way International.

How can we help you? If you need some answers, direction, or someone to listen to you, give us a call.

I know you want to serve God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Step outside Dr. Wierwille's legacy, rely on the Holy Spirit and God's Word, and you will find a more than abundant life.

In Jesus Christ,



John P. Juedes

## Branham

(continued from page 1)

During and just after the operation, Branham said he had a series of visions that ultimately drove him to the woodshed behind his house crying out to God:

"Suddenly there appeared a light in the form of a cross and a voice spoke to him in a language he did not understand. Then it went away. He became frightened and wondered as he said, 'Lord, if this is you, please come back and talk to me again.' The light reentered the shed. As he prayed, it appeared again the third time. Now he realized that he had met God. He was happy; he was thankful." (**A Prophet Visits**, pp. 9-11)

Branham immediately sensed a calling from God to preach. His early association was with the Missionary Baptist Church, but he also had contact with some Pentecostal Holiness groups. Because of his mystical leanings it was with these "oneness" Pentecostal people that Branham felt most comfortable and accepted. Ultimately, it was through them that he was catapulted into worldwide recognition as a great miracle worker. (**All Things are Possible**, David Edwin Harrell, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1975, pp. 27-40)

In May 1946, Branham received yet another angelic visitation. He was informed that if he would be sincere and persuade the people to believe in him, nothing would be able to stand before his prayers, not even cancer. (**A Man Sent From God**, pp. 76-77) It was after this visitation that Branham's healing and deliverance ministry grew to worldwide proportions and touched thousands of lives. (**All Things**, pp. 27-40, 159-164)

During the late 1950s, the healing and deliverance rallies of the previous decade began to decline. Branham began to devote more time to his home church, Branham Tabernacle of Jeffersonville, Ind. Away from the influence of the more orthodox leaders of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, Branham soared to new heights of heterodoxy. He was idolized and even worshipped by most of his followers, who thought he could teach no error.

His teachings included the claim that he was Elijah the prophet, that he was the seventh angelic messenger to the Laodicean Church Age (**Footprints**, pg. 620), that anyone belonging to any denomination had taken "the mark of the beast" (**Footprints**, pp. 627, 629, 643, 648) and that he received divinely inspired revelations. (**The Revelation of the Seven Seals**, William Branham, Spoken Word Publications, Tucson, Ariz., n.d., pg. 19; **Questions and Answers**, Book 1,

William Branham, Spoken Word Publishers, Tucson, Ariz., 1964, pg. 60)

These revelations included: an elaborate but unscriptural eschatological system known as the Revelation of the Seven Seals, the idea that the fall of man happened when Eve had sexual relations with Satan, that this sexual union produced Cain and in so doing begat a fallen race with Satan's nature. (**An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages**, William Branham, Branham Publisher, n.d., pp. 98-99, 101) As a corollary to this, Branham said that "every sin that ever was on the Earth was caused by a woman. ... the very lowest creature on the Earth." (**The Spoken Word**, Vol. III, Nos. 12, 13, 14; William Branham, Spoken Word Publications, Jefferson, Ind., 1976, pp. 81-82. Quoted in **The Man and His Message**, pg. 41)

### Evaluation of a Ministry

That there were healings and supernatural occurrences at Branham's rallies is historically verifiable. That Branham was "a man sent from God," a "prophet to bring the Christian church into final truth," is highly questionable because of Branham's bizarre and unscriptural doctrines.

Branham's acceptance as a great "man of God" by ministers such as Oral Roberts, Ern Baxter, Gordon Lindsey and T.L. Osborn, and the public seems to rest

on two factors: his humble spirit and his power to work miracles. It is the opinion of this writer that there is no clear scriptural justification for using either of these to authenticate spiritual orthodoxy.

There have been many well outside the ranks of orthodox Christianity who have clearly demonstrated a meek and humble demeanor. Certain Buddhist and Hindu holy men are noted for these traits. Kindness, humility, and a meek character in and of themselves means absolutely nothing apart from the indwelling Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible is very clear that even miracles are by themselves not true indicators of doctrinal orthodoxy. The magicians of Pharaoh's court were able to duplicate many of God's miracles performed through Moses (Exodus 7:10-13; 8:6-7). And in the New Testament, Paul speaks of lying signs and wonders ascribed to the power of the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9)

How then is one to come to a conclusion about whether or not Branham was indeed a "man sent from God?" As with Joseph Smith Jr., Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy or anyone claiming to be a prophet; Branham's teachings about God must be measured against the Bible.

The role of a prophet is nothing more than being a "mouthpiece" for God. He merely relays what God tells him to say. Jesus, in Matthew 7:15-24, tells how to recognize a false prophet. The fruit that we are to examine is not the fruit of life, as many would have us believe, but what he says God says. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 and 18:20-22 give us other criteria for testing a prophet: He will work signs and wonders, but even if he does and then teaches us to follow after strange gods, he is to be rejected; he will predict future events, but every one of those predictions must come true, or the prophet is to be rejected. Branham fails both the Matthew and Deuteronomy tests.

Evidence exists that Branham was doctrinally aberrant from the inception of his popular healing campaigns. Charismatic evangelist Em Baxter was with Branham at the height of his popularity from 1947 to 1954. In an article in the December 1978 **New Wine Magazine**, Baxter wrote: "when he would speak, especially in those early days, he would say some things that were terribly provocative. To me, (they were) unnecessarily so. So when we talked together, we agreed that apart from his giving testimonies and relating his life story, I

would do all the speaking and he would do all the ministry to the sick. That was the way it was when we were together." (pg. 56) As time progressed, Branham's doctrine deviated further and further from the standard.

As mentioned above, there is evidence that supernatural signs did occur at Branham's meetings (**A Prophet Visits**, pp. 48-195). The healings and prophecies purportedly came through an angel that was always with Branham on stage and continually gave him counsel and revelations. (**William Branham: His Life and Teachings**, Kathie Adler, Narrow Way Ministries, Holbrook, N.Y., 1986, pp. 3-5) This has given rise to the charges by some researchers that Branham practiced occult healing. (**Between Christ and Satan**, Kurt E. Koch, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971, pp. 149-150) But it is equally evident that Branham taught an unscriptural view of God that would put him under the "strange god" clause of Deuteronomy 13:1-3:

"What is God? God is a great Eternal. At the beginning, way back before there was a beginning, he wasn't even God. Did you know that? A god is an object of worship, and there wasn't nothing to worship him; He lived alone. And in him was attributes. What is an attribute? A thought." (**The Spoken Word**, Vol. III, pg. 79)

Moreover, true to his early oneness Pentecostal teachings, Branham denied the biblical triune Godhead. He pronounced it a "gross error" (**The Spoken Word**, pg. 79) and as a prophet with the authority of a "Thus saith the Lord," revealed that "trinitarianism is of the devil." (**Footprints**, pg. 606)

Signs and wonders? Yes. Strange Gods? Yes. False prophet? Absolutely!

Branham also failed the test of a true prophet in that his predictions did not come true with 100 percent accuracy:

"Based on these seven visions, along with the rapid changes which swept the world in the last 50 years, I predict (I do not prophesy) that these visions will have all come to pass by 1977. And though many may feel that this is an irresponsible statement in view of the fact that Jesus said that 'no man knoweth the day nor the hour,' I still maintain this prediction after 30 years because, Jesus did not say no man could know the year, month, or week in which His coming was to be completed. So I repeat, I sincerely believe and main-

tain as a private student of the word, along with divine inspiration that 1977 ought to terminate the world system and usher in the Millennium." (**Seven Church Ages**, pg. 322)

Despite the fact that Branham tried to qualify his statement by saying he "predicted" rather than "prophesied" certain events, any time a prophet of God speaks under "divine inspiration," it is a prophecy.

It is now 1988. The United States has not been destroyed, the world's systems have not been terminated, and the Millennium has not begun. Therefore we can conclude that Branham was not a true prophet of God.

It is fortunate for researchers that almost every word Branham uttered from the pulpit in Branham Tabernacle was recorded and transcribed. To the Branham follower, it is the "spoken word," on an equal footing with the Bible. To the investigator, it is confirmation that Branham's teachings were definitely not from God.

The ready acceptance of Branham by a large portion of those in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition points to a serious flaw in that way of thinking.

Instead of a clearly articulated theology based on inductive Bible study, the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has by and large derived its teachings from personal experience and then tried to find Scripture to authenticate the experiences. Where no scriptural authentication can be found, "special revelation knowledge" is often appealed to. This has led to a superstar mentality that unfortunately pervades the movement.

"Apostles" and "prophets" abound in this milieu and like Branham receive extra-biblical revelations. Also, like Branham, they point to miraculous signs and wonders as proof that their aberrant teachings are from God.

Christians can learn a valuable lesson from the life and teachings of men such as Branham: In God's economy there are no superstars. All are subject to the same scriptural scrutiny. Anyone who stands to proclaim the Word of God must "speak according to the law and the testimony." By speaking he is automatically subjecting himself to a close "fruit inspection" by the household of faith. This is true whether his name is Joseph Smith Jr., Charles T. Russell or William Branham. ❀

William M. Branham sketch by Eddie Eddings. Used by permission of Street Meetings, Inc., Dallas, Texas.

"Within Christian circles, there has arisen a new concern for ministries of deliverance. Some of these deliverance ministries have developed a bizarre and radically unbiblical view of demon possession and deliverance.

...There are demons for every conceivable sin. No only must each one of these demons be exorcized, but there are necessary procedures to keep them from returning on a daily basis. I know of no polite way to respond to this kind of teaching. It is unmitigated nonsense. Nowhere in sacred Scripture is there to be found the slightest hint of this kind of demonic diagnosis. These teachings cross the line into the sphere of magic and result in serious harm to believers who are duped by them. Sadly, too much concern with Satan and demons means we focus less of our attention on Christ. That must please Satan, though it certainly is not pleasing to God.

... If a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit can at the same time be sovereignly controlled by an evil spirit, then our redemption is defeated. ... Satan may be our accomplice in our ongoing sin, but we cannot pass the blame and responsibility for our sin to a controlling demon. ... We are encouraged to think that we are not really guilty and that we are actually helpless without a minister with special powers of deliverance. This negates the entire biblical concept of sanctification. ... Therefore, I say with all urgency that believers must turn away from those who teach such things. Indeed run, for your very spiritual lives." (pp. 90-92)

In his warnings, Sproul correctly identifies the contemporary wave of deliverance ministries as a "renewal." "They that will not learn from history are doomed to repeat it" is an old saying that certainly applies in the realm of the church. There is current teaching, popularized by the deliverance movements, that is gaining popularity, but is really a revival of an older view from 300 years ago, and it may be the undoing of some people and of some churches.

From various quarters today we are hearing a doctrine of sanctification that is quite unlike anything taught by the Reformers or in historical mainstream Christianity. This new doctrine of sanctification suggests that Satan can occupy the body of a believer and use that body as a staging ground for his operations. All kinds of mental and behavioral activities are explained as the presence of demons. There are various nuances and disagreements in the deliverance movement that range from believers being occupied by demons because of ground given by willful sin, to resident demons from pre-conversion days, and to ancestral demons that haunt and indwell us because of the sins of our ancestors. This last is the hardest to accept and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer doesn't seem to make a wisp of a difference to the purveyors of any of these ideas.

There are some people who make a feeble attempt to "prove" the demonization of believers from the Scriptures. Through strained interpretation and faulty hermeneutics, they do just as the cults do. Others are more honest and admit that this curious doctrine is not biblical and they try to prove their premise from highly subjective interpretations of case studies. At this point, the attempts to verify an actual

exorcism get pretty wild. Some demons are supposedly cast out, but if symptoms remain, the demon that was cast out was the wrong one or it has come back. Or exorcism can be tried again. Coughing, wrenching, vomiting and a host of other things are given as "proof" that the demon is gone.

There are a host of books citing all the "evidence." (**Pigs in the Parlor, A Practical Guide to Deliverance**, Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, Impact Books, 1973; **I Was Delivered from Deliverance**, Jason Vinley; private printing, n.d.). There is even one "deliverance" man who can cast a demon out of one Christian (presumably a weak believer) and into a stronger Christian. The stronger Christian then can deal with the demon. (**The Confrontation of Evil**, James Bjornstad, cassette tape, Spiritual Counterfeits Project Conference, 1986) Others have even discovered "she" demons! (**Demon Possession and the Christian**, C. Fred Dickason, Moody Press, 1987, pg. 192). There are some teachers who claim that this information comes from the demons themselves; as if demons would tell the truth and are eager to reveal Satan's wiles and strategies.

In every case where this writer has encountered this teaching, it has brought confusion, division, upset, schism and, occasionally, elitism. Its fruits are highly suspect and hardly pass the test of James 3:16-18:

"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

It is amazing that evangelical churches get into so many unbiblical notions and practices. One fad gaining popularity is that of "renunciation," the practice of saying stock prayers or repeating stock phrases to drive away and keep away Satan. Those who promote "renunciation" usually also promote the unscriptural notion that Christians can be invaded and indwelt by demons, both ancestral and otherwise.

Here is a sample of one such renunciation prayer from a Moody Press publication by Mark Bubeck called **The Adversary**:

#### "Renunciation and Affirmation

As a child of God purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I here and now renounce and repudiate all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified with Jesus Christ and raised to walk in newness of life, I cancel every curse that may have been put upon me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me when He hung on the cross. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and now sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. All this I do in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:5-6; Col. 1:13).

(Name and Date)"

(continued on next page)

Dickason and Kurt Koch, author of **Occult Bondage and Deliverance**, (Kregel Press), also favor such teachings.

The normal biblical process of resisting Satan (and trusting the biblical promise that he will flee) and occupation with Christ and service as the normal method of sanctification is not enough for some.

It is just amazing and incredible that the modern church can get into such things. The extrabiblical notion of “renunciation” can create paranoia and much confusion. It has been resurrected from the dark ages and medieval traditions of folk magic. In Latin the prayer is called **abrenuntiatio diaboli** and was part of the infant baptism ritual. Somehow the prayer was seen to cancel Satan’s rights. An understanding of Romans 5 shows us that is what Jesus has already done!

One could never get the idea of a renunciation ritual from the Bible. However, supporters of this view try to bolster their case by misusing 2 Corinthians 4:2, which says “We have **renounced** the hidden things.” The text has to do with ministers being honest and transparent and handling the Word of God in a responsible way. It has nothing to do with exorcism or rituals. The word renounce (**apeipon**) has a distinct meaning. Any standard Greek lexicon will show that **apeipon** means: removal from, to part from, to detach, to leave, to separate from, to bid farewell, to withdraw, to forsake, to disown, to not approach, or to have nothing to do with.

Whatever we are renouncing here is not demons. It is dishonesty, hypocrisy, and a mishandling of Scripture. Paul is saying we disown and have parted from, and stay away from, dishonesty. Those who bandy the text around and force “renunciation” prayers into it are doing the very things the text says not to do.

Dr. Jay Adams decrees the total lack of discernment in the Church today and pleads for a development of discernment:

“In all that you do, be absolutely sure that it is the biblically certain truths of God for which you contend. It is easy to identify one’s own interpretation of the Bible with the Bible itself. Moreover, it is an equally fatal flaw in many people who mean well to confuse the traditions of the church with the teachings of the Scripture. Spiritual discernment makes a person aware of such matters. Discernment, the capacity to separate truth from error, is vitally important.” (**A Call to Discernment**, page 51)

Jesus did not say to Satan, “hold on till I write out a renunciation prayer.” He said, “It is written!”

Everything believers need for spiritual growth is given in Scripture. What “deliverance” people fail to realize is that not only does their heresy on sanctification fail the biblical test but it also fails the historical test. This strange teaching first came to the fore during the Middle Ages in Europe and then again later in Salem, Massachusetts. It always created horrendous problems and that should make us very wary of it now.

In New England, during the time of the Puritans, Cotten Mather, Increase Mather and Samuel Willard believed and taught that even though a person was a regenerate Christian, Satan never relinquished control over the inner workings of his human nature. Fortunately, they were not representative

of all Puritans, but their beliefs led to serious problems. In the view of these men the believer could never take comfort in Christ’s triumph of good over evil, or in the indwelling Spirit. Rather, he is forced to never ever relax his struggle to defeat Satan within. This hardly resembles the rest that Christ promised in Matthew 11:28. Willard writes emphatically, “Let us expect that Satan will fall upon us again, and therefore take heed of growing secure.” (**Witchcraft, Magic and Religion in 17th Century Massachusetts**, Richard Weisman, pg. 27) The indwelling of Satan, or demons in a Christian’s body, was termed “affliction.” Of course, verification of “affliction” was widely subjective, as was proof of deliverance from “affliction.” It is unfortunate that this teaching renders a Christian incapable of enjoying rest and security in Christ.

During the Middle Ages, the practice of ritual exorcism was widespread. This “deliverance” teaching was rejected by the major Reformers as folk magic. In their view, the Cross was the most dramatic expression of the cosmic struggle between God and Satan. Though the Christian has conflict and temptation, his experience is not the ultimate place of that conflict. What happened on Calvary is applied to the believer once for all.

The worst of it has yet to be mentioned. Willard and the Mathers spearheaded the hysteria of the Salem witch trials. That is what their views led them to, and it was their beliefs and the pressing of those beliefs that led to innocent deaths and years of confusion. Their teaching that believers could have indwelling demons led people to suspicion and despair rather than greater piety. Unbiblical views of sanctification will do that.

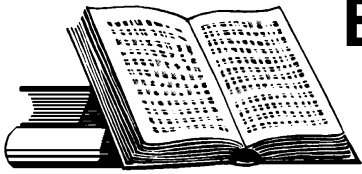
No matter how sincere they are, the “deliverance” ministries of today are misguided. They are more like the speculative magic of 17th century New England than like anything found in Scripture.

There are obvious parallels in these sobering words of Richard Weisman concerning the Salem witch trials and they bear consideration today:

“Such lack of equivalence between human understanding and Satanic design made the problem of identification an extremely complex theological issue. If human perceptions were unreliable in ascertaining one’s own spiritual condition and if the clues offered by Satan to expose the witch were apt to be obscure or misleading, then a most frightful predicament resulted. Anyone – even the most pious of believers – could suspect himself and be suspected by others of witchcraft. It may be observed here that throughout the history of the crime in Massachusetts, the clergy remained hesitant, if not unwilling, to issue the stamp of infallibility to any testimony short of the actual confession of the witch. Even this evidence, however, would be doubted in the aftermath of the Salem trials.” (**Witchcraft, Magic and Religion in 17th Century Massachusetts**, Richard Weisman, pp. 37-38)

We must learn from church history so that we are not doomed to repeat its mistakes in any degree. We need to see clearly the roots and fruits of this speculative and divisive teaching.

—GRF



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## CONFRONTING THE NEW AGE

by Douglas Groothuis

InterVarsity Press, 230 pages, \$7.95

Douglas Groothuis' follow-up book to his **Unmasking the New Age** falls short of expectations of an equal offering.

There is only about one thing positive about this book: Groothuis is still opposed to New Age teaching. The negatives include Groothuis trying to get readers to accept:

- Postmillennial eschatology or a diminished concern with a precise eschatology.
- Reconstructionism, or dominion theology.
- The "signs and wonders movement" of John Wimber.
- A form of ancestral bondage.

All of these are offered as ways to confront and counteract New Age ideas. Unfortunately, all four of those are at best peripheral and debatable ideas. A good working knowledge of the doctrine of God, an ability to refute reincarnationism and share the Gospel of Christ should certainly be potent enough.

It is unfortunate that this sequel does not match the quality of Groothuis' first work. Perhaps his theology is in transition. His new direction may make some postmillennial charismatics happy, but few others.

—GRF



**Editors Note:** The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach - Midwest. Please add \$1.00 to the price listed to cover postage. These books are also available to those who help to financially support us this quarter. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.

## THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT ARMSTRONGISM

by Roger R. Chambers

Baker Book House, 165 pages, \$7.95

Baker Book House has reissued its out-of-print 1972 book, **The Plain Truth About Armstrongism** by Roger C. Chambers.

Chambers' major focus in analyzing the Worldwide Church of God is its promotion of British-Israelism. His refutation of the lost tribes theory is most thorough. Other chapters examine Sabbath-keeping and Armstrong's Wednesday crucifixion/Saturday resurrection doctrine. Absent from the book is an investigation and rebuttal of the cult's twisted Christology. This would have been a welcome addition.

While this 1988 release is labeled as a "second edition" and "updated exposé," it is little more than a word-for-word reprinting of the author's 1972 work. The addition of a second preface and the updating of a brief historical and doctrinal introductory section mark the most significant revisions.

The most notable update of the latest edition is the price. The last printing of the first edition sold for \$1.25, the new printing sells for \$7.95. Therefore, Christians who have a first-edition copy of Chambers' work should be content, rather than spending so much for so few and minor changes. However, the Christian who does not have this book, will find it helpful in exposing the errors of Armstrongism, even though it cannot be regarded as the definitive work on the subject.

—MKG



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## The Quarterly Journal

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